



ACT Health

Office of the Director-General

Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
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Dear Ms Dunstone

Inquiry into the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023

The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) has committed to investing in workplace culture since its inception in October 2018. However, it is difficult to determine the specific timeframe when this reported incident occurred with regards to the reported experience of someone working with ACT Health Directorate (page 7).

Following the machinery of government process that resulted in the permanent separation of ACTHD and Canberra Health Services (CHS), in response to significant reporting on culture related concerns, the ACT Government funded the Culture Review Implementation program in 2019 for a period of three years.

Independent Culture Review into Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services (Culture Review), reported in May 2019 and noted that effective workplace cultures are person-centred, learning-focused, evidence-based, and adaptive to changing requirements, and supported by staff who take responsibility for delivering quality outcomes and are proud of the service they provide and the place they work. The review found there was a discrepancy between the stated and lived values within the three arms of the ACT public health system including the ACT Health Directorate, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and Canberra Health Service. It recommended that organisational strategy and desired leadership traits should be much more embedded through the demonstration of organisation values. All 20 recommendations from the Independent Review were accepted and progressed as part of the Culture Review Program, within ACTHD.

The Culture Review Implementation program, launched in May 2019, established a strategic approach to enhance culture reform underpinned by the five key pillars of the Workplace Culture Framework: Organisational Trust, People and Leadership skills, Workplace Civility, Psychological Safety, and Team Effectiveness. These elements have been reinforced in the ACTHD transition people plan.

Over the three years of the funded Culture Review program, three Independent Reviews were undertaken to ensure that progress was being made. These included:

- The **Inaugural Annual Review** reported in June 2020 that pleasing progress had been made to re-engage with staff to ensure the vision and values are lived and embraced at all levels, integrated with strategy and constantly reflected by leadership.
- In November 2021, the **Second Annual Review** noted that all three organisations had engaged positively to affirm and embed the identified organisational values within each entity. It recommended that focus continue to establish expectations of positive workplace behaviour and ensure values-aligned behaviour are consistently being demonstrated by staff, at all levels.
- The **Third Annual Review** was reported in January 2023. It highlighted a range of examples of how the values had been integrated with strategy and people-related practices. It also highlighted the noticeable change in attitude from current leaders, setting clearer expectations of behaviour and calling into account long-term inappropriate behaviours.

All three organisations undertook comprehensive nuanced work to re-engage staff and ensure their organisation values are lived and embraced at all levels. ACTHD implemented the ACT Public Service Values, while CHS undertook an extensive staff consultation process to define and implement the CHS Values. Calvary Public Hospital Bruce developed and implemented the Values in Action Framework, which underpins people-related initiatives implemented by Calvary Public Hospital and articulates the behaviours expected of all employees.

Each organisation has established an annual Awards and Recognition program, with staff being recognised for exemplifying the values and making an outstanding contribution to the organisation. Values are also reinforced through regular Director-General and Chief Executive Officer 'shout outs', recognising individuals and teams that exemplify the values and expected behaviours, and through targeted internal communications including individual and team stories. Each organisation has refreshed recruitment and selection training and developed refreshed performance development templates and other departmental products to reflect the focus on culture and values across the public health system.

All 20 recommendations from the Independent Review were endorsed as being completed by January 2023.

With the establishment of ACTHD being a single entity, there has been a focus to establish organisational systems, processes and procedures. This has included those required within the people and culture space. Since October 2018, there has been an investment in the establishment of the People Strategy and Culture Branch, officially becoming a branch in July 2021. Since then, a range of strategies have been developed including:

- I. Learning and Development Strategy
- II. Operational Workforce Planning Framework
- III. Work Health and Safety

IV. Wellbeing at Work Strategy

V. Inclusion Strategy

The focus has been on investing in our people, in ways that reinforce a psychologically safe, valued and inclusive workplace. These are ongoing priorities that we are striving to develop and continue to invest in, promote and to ensure that we have a workplace that people desire to work at.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Rule
Director-General

9 August 2023